

Vol. LI No. 30

Wednesday, July 25, 2001

## Sidewalk Report Released

By SUSANNA SHEEHAN

After more than a year of research, the ad hoc sidewalk committee has completed its report and recommendations for sidewalk locations in town. The report was presented to selectmen this week.

Jeff Lewis, committee chairman, said the committee, appointed by selectmen in April 2000, was guided by this mission statement: "To recommend

a comprehensive plan and policy for the construction of sidewalks to increase citizens' safety in a way that preserves the town's character and beauty."

"Traffic volume and speed on Duxbury's streets has increased in recent years," stated the committee's report. "This situation is attributed to an increase in population, more hectic lifestyles, and the growing

tendency for people to rush to reach their destinations. These trends, coupled with the narrowness of many streets, lack of road shoulders, and lack of street lighting represent threats to pedestrian safety."

The committee was charged with identifying "high traffic main feeder streets" and "pass-through streets" and prioritiz-

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ing sidewalk construction projects. Because the town has no plan in place for choosing streets that need sidewalks, the committee created a sidewalk rating sheet that allowed it to recommend sidewalks for certain streets based on objective not subjective information. This rating system contains seven criteria, which represent the main factors in determining the need for sidewalks.

These criteria include: street classification, (a state or local road, or a primary or collector street); roadway width; average daily traffic volume; 85 percent traffic speed; street length; network linkage; and household density. The committee agreed that sidewalks should link neighborhood streets or neighborhoods to destinations. Household density is the number of households per mile. Higher densities mean more potential for pedestrian traffic and greater need for sidewalks, stated the report. Data for the volume and ratings was gathered using electronic counting devices, which also measured speed.

Since the committee could not research all the streets in Duxbury (there are over 350), it chose to rate streets that came with some available data already, as well as streets the committee considered as highest priorities for having sidewalks, and those that represented a high and a low score in the ratings. The criteria can be used to rate any street in town.

Chestnut St., where a side-

walk project is currently underway, received the highest score on the ratings sheet. Next was Depot St., Saint George St., Washington St., Powder Point Ave., Lincoln St. (north of Rte 14), Alden St., Harrison St., Tobey Garden St., the east and west portions of Winter St., King Caesar Rd., Mayflower St. and Valley St. Route 3A was also rated, but it had data missing so it didn't receive a completed score.

The committee agreed that developing a network of sidewalks linked to one another, rather than randomly disconnected sidewalks, would best serve the town, stated the report. It created a map showing a primary and a secondary route. The primary route forms a loop that includes Chestnut St., Route 3A, Alden and St. George streets and Washington St. Depot St. is also included. A spur off this loop is Powder Point Ave. off to the beach.

"Balancing the need for pedestrian safety on Duxbury's streets with the preservation of the historical and rural nature of the town was paramount in the minds of the Committee members," stated the report. "It was also felt that the town government's involvement in sidewalk construction would only be appropriate in instances where sidewalks would benefit the entire town, rather than merely the residents of a particular street."

With this guiding attitude, the committee also looked at establishing sidewalk construction standards for specific categories and streets and visited many towns and took many pic-

tures of various sidewalks. These are included in the report.

Identifying sidewalk finance options was also part of the charge. Lewis said there is some federal funding, but the application process was long and the competition intense. Using state money means that sidewalks have to be constructed to state standards, which means increasing a road's width and adding grass shoulders and sidewalks. This widening often isn't feasible with Duxbury's narrow, historic roads. The committee recommended the town set aside money annually for sidewalk projects.

In considering betterments, the committee turned to its ratings chart. No betterments should be charged to residents on streets that have a score of 15 or higher (Chestnut St. had a score of 22) or if those streets have a safety issue or if a sidewalk there would provide a benefit to the whole town. The committee felt betterments should be considered on streets with lower scores. The committee recommended the town use the ratings when residents petition the town for a sidewalk on their street.

Selectmen commended Lewis and the committee for their hard work and fine report.

"This report has something for everyone," said Selectman Margaret Kearney. "Safety really drove the committee. There's just no safe place in this town for kids and walkers."

The report will be available for public review at the town hall and the library.